



Advising International Students from China

Panel Discussion Handout

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Overview

What should academic advisors know about the educational systems and educational assumptions of the international students they advise? How can advisors communicate successfully with students transitioning between cultures? How can advisors make materials user friendly to international students? Drawing on their experiences as international students and as advisors working with international students from China, our panelists will suggest strategies to assist advisors as they interact with students making language and cultural transitions.

Pre-Event Activity Suggestions

We encourage viewers to read the following articles prior to the broadcast. If you are viewing the Panel Discussion with a group, you may find it helpful to meet for a few minutes prior to the broadcast to share your thoughts.

Phung, A. (2012, January 16). A surge in graduate students from China brings big benefits. Available at <http://bigthink.com/ideas/41938>

Yung-Hwa Anna Chow (Sept 2010) notes that "advising international students from China is a very complex process given the educational and cultural differences and often language barriers" and shares [NI How: What Academic Advisors Can Do To Better Serve Students from China](#) in NACADA's *Academic Advising Today*.

Wei-Chien Lee (March 2009) discusses [Promoting and Practicing Diversity in Advising: Rationales and Approaches](#) in NACADA's *Academic Advising Today*.

Panel Discussion Questions

- *Why are there so many students coming from China to study in North America at this time?*
- *What do advisors need to know about the educational systems and assumptions of their advisees' native culture?*
- *What transition needs do students have as they arrive and begin classes?*
- *How can advisors make their approach and materials friendly to international students?*

Post-Event Activity Suggestions

The following quotes were shared with Yung-Hwa Anna Chow during her NACADA grant-funded research at Fudan University this year. Following the broadcast, you may wish to reflect on (or, if you viewed with a group, to discuss) how they fit with your understanding of the international students you advise (or may advise in future).

"Looking at the Chinese education system, there are still a lot of inequalities. My friend from Henan, there were one million students who took the gao kao, he placed 19th and got into Fudan. So in Henan, only about 10% can test into college. In Shanghai there were 68,000 students who took the test, and 64,000 were able to test into college. The system is not fair at all. So you asked if most students will attend college, most students from developed cities, yes, but students from rural areas, most likely not. Everyone hopes to attend college, but most of them will not" —Fudan College first-year student.

"Changing one's major is a huge decision. You're used to being with your cohort and your friends and the classes. Unless you really hate your major and you really love something else, no one really changes their major"—Fudan third-year student.

"We see all 4 years as an opportunity for them to succeed. We don't dismiss them for one semester or two of poor grades. We encourage them to make adjustments and changes and will look at their progress at the end of the 4 year process, to see if they have the overall 2.0 (GPA). Some students might start off their first year with really poor grades, but once they start taking courses within their major, they perform quite well. So their grades will even out at the end." —Director of Fudan College.

"So in China, we have this concept of cohorts/class. And there is a class monitor/leader. For example, if I forget about an assignment, I can ask the class monitor or my roommates. Everyone is together and learning and living is more relaxed. I don't have to be too independent because if I forget something, I have an easy way to retrieving that information"—Chinese international student at Washington State University.

References and Recommended Resources

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(2011, November 8). First-time international graduate student enrollment surges 8%; Increase driven largely by China's 6th year of double-digit growth. Council of Graduate Schools. Available at http://www.cgsnet.org/portals/0/pdf/N_pr_IntlAdm11_III.pdf

Fischer, K. (2011, September 11). Community college draws foreign students by serving as a gateway to universities. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Available at <http://chronicle.com/article/Community-College-Draws/128927/>

Hathaway, T. (2011, September 4). How American colleges can better serve Chinese applicants. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Available at <http://chronicle.com/article/How-American-Colleges-Can/128861/>

Henneck, M. (2011, December 4). Chinese campuses expand counseling services for stressed-out students. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Available at <http://chronicle.com/article/Chinese-Campuses-Expand/129990/>

Henneck, M. (2010, August 9). With new survey, Chinese colleges ask students what they really think. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Available at <http://chronicle.com/article/With-New-Survey-Chinese/123858/>

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Advising International Students from China

A Panel Discussion



International Students U.S. Institutions 2010-2011

Total international student enrollment

- 723,277 students

Top places of origin

- China, India, South Korea, Canada, Taiwan

From China

- 157,558 students (up 23% from last year)

Why are there so many students coming from China to study in North America at this time?



Reasons

- Financial (China's new wealthy middle class)



- Prestige / Perception that American education is superior

Reasons



- American popular culture
- Flexibility of American system
- English fluency
- Marketability

What do advisors need to know about the educational systems and assumptions of their advisees' native culture?



Cultural Assumptions

- Confucian influence
- Meritocracy - one is rewarded based on his/her hard work, credentials, accomplishments, education



Educational System

- Competitive
- Rigorous



Educational System

- Entrance (Gao Kao)
- Major
- Cohorts
- Mentoring / advising



What transition needs do students have as they arrive and begin classes?





Cultural and Language Adjustment

- Expressing oneself in the classroom
- Plagiarism

Lack of understanding of American Higher Ed systems

- General Education Requirements
- Academic Language
- Role of Various Offices
- Where to seek help

Transfer Credit Issues

- Do institutions have transfer agreement?
- What will students have to do to enable transfer work to count?
- What requirements will they fulfill?

Out of the total number of international students, 62% of undergraduates enroll as Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors

How can advisors make their approach and materials friendly to international students?



Ways Advisors Can Help

- Face to face advising
- Use oral and written explanations
- Allow group advising
- Be patient
- Make connections

Ways Advisors Can Help

- Encourage critical thinking development
- Encourage participation in International program events/activities

Ways Advisors Can Help

- Encourage development of transfer agreements
- Find student / graduate student / professor from home country to assist with advising

I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.

- Maya Angelou


